

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 21-32 are pending. Claims 5-7 and 20 have been canceled without prejudice and without disclaimer. Claims 21-24 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced. Applicants believe the claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Pursuant to a telephone conference with the Examiner, Applicants have canceled claims 5-7 and 20 (previously allowed and subsequently rejected) in order to prosecute claims 21-32 withdrawn by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully submit that the examination of claims 21-32 would not present extra or undue burden as the two sets of claims are closely related together as subcombinations usable together. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the previous restriction requirement be withdrawn. Should the Examiner maintain the restriction requirement, Applicants respectfully request a showing that one of the subcombinations has utility other than in the disclosed combination.

Applicants believe claims 21-32 are novel and patentable over the cited art. For example, claim 21 recites that the Fiber Channel switching module relays the data of the input command to the disk array system without transferring the data of the input command to the controlling module, if the Fiber Channel switching module receives the input command. Claim 23 recites that the Fiber Channel switching module relays the data of the input command to the first or second disk array systems without transferring the data of the input command to the controlling module, if the Fiber Channel switching module receives the input command. Claim 25 recites that the Fiber Channel switching device relays the data of the write access request to the first disk array system without transferring the data of the write access request to the controlling device, if the Fiber Channel switching device receives the write access request. Claim 29 recites that the Fiber Channel switching device relays the data of the access request to the first disk array system without transferring the data of the access request to the controlling device, if the Fiber Channel switching device receives the access request. These features are absent from the cited references.

Appl. No.: 10/661,154  
Amdt. dated: June 2, 2006  
Reply to Office Action of: February 9, 2006

PATENT

**CONCLUSION**

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance and an action to that end is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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